

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 171444Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5596
INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T LONDON 14722

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS INFO SECDEF - MILITARY HANDLE AS SPECAT

EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, MU
SUBJ: MASIRAH: PLANNING FOR RAF PHASE-OUT

1. BRYANT, POL-MIL OFFICER IN FCO MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT BRIEFED EMBOFF AT LATTER'S REQUEST SEPTEMBER 17 ON PLANNING FOR PHASE-OUT OF RAF FROM MASIRAH. HMG HAS DEVELOPED CONTINGENCY PLAN (OF WHICH OMANIS HAVE NOT, REPEAT NOT, BEEN INFORMED) TO AGREE TO LOAN AS MANY AS 12 BRITISH PERSONNEL ON SECONDMENT TO OMANI GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE AIRFIELD. THEY WOULD BE PAID FOR BY OMANIS. SO FAR THE OMANIS HAVE ASKED FOR ONLY SIX POSITIONS TO BE SO FILLED, ALL GROUND STAFF, AS FOLLOWS: STATION COMMANDER, SENIOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL OFFICER, SENIOR SUPPLY OFFICER, MEDICAL OFFICER, ENGINEERING OFFICER, AND FIREMAN. THESE WOULD PHASE IN DURING PERIOD JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 1977 AS RAF COMPLETES PHASING OUT.

2. THERE IS SO FAR NO INDICATION THAT THE OMANIS WILL ASK FOR ADDITIONAL SECONDED PERSONNEL. WHILE THE OMANIS CONTINUE TO PLAN TO SET UP A FLYING SCHOOL IN MASIRAH, THEY HAVE ENOUGH CONTRACT PERSONNEL (PRESUMABLY

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ALL OR MAINLY BRITISH) IN THE SOAF TO TEACH PEOPLE HOW

TO FLY.

3. BRYANT SAID FCO STILL HAS NO DETAILS ON HOW EXACTLY THE NEW AIRFIELD ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE SET UP, HOW BIG THEY WOULD BE, OR HOW THE HAND-OVER WOULD TAKE PLACE. HE NOTED THAT A PARALLEL DIALOGUE IS GOING ON IN OMAN AS TO WHAT ASSETS RAF WILL LEAVE.

4. BRYANT SAID IT WAS 99 PERCENT CERTAIN THAT THE BBC INSTALLATION AT MASIRAH, THE BRITISH EASTERN RELAY STATION, WOULD REMAIN. HOWEVER, THIS MUST BE APPROVED AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT BUDGET CUTS. HE NOTED THAT AFTER RAF WITHDRAWAL THE BBC PERSONNEL "WILL HAVE TO ADMINISTER THEMSELVES A BIT MORE" BUT DID NOT EXPECT THE BBC WOULD ADD STAFF FOR THIS PURPOSE. HE MENTIONED THAT ADDITIONAL SAFF WAS BEING ADDED ONLY FOR AN ADDITIONAL SHORT-WAVE FACILITY.

5. BRYANT THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE FOR EMBASSY LONDON TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH FCO ON MASIRAH SINCE KEY DECISIONS AFFECTING IT ARE BEING MADE IN LONDON.

ARMSTRONG

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF.

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, AIRPORTS, CLOSURE OF OFFICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 SEP 1976
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON14722
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760353-0032
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760949/aaaabqau.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <13 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MASIRAH: PLANNING FOR RAF PHASE-OUT
TAGS: PFOR, MU, US, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006